

# PEOPLE & THINGS

**I**F I were a casting director looking for a "typical"

British military officer I should be tempted to overlook our own Army List and choose Major - General Iskander Mirza, who has just become Acting Governor-General of Pakistan. General Mirza was the first Indian—in the undivided India of 1919—to pass out of Sandhurst, and today he is, in speech and bearing, more Camberley than Camberley.

His soldierly forthrightness has at times caused some embarrassment to the Governor-General, Mr. Ghulam Mohammed. When the General declared last autumn that Pakistan was "not ready for democratic government," Mr. Ghulam Mohammed, I gather, felt that this was an opinion he might well have kept to himself. On the whole, however, the two men are at one in their detestation of the intrigue and corruption that for years bedevilled Pakistani politics, and in their determination that the country shall not rush into "democracy" at the expense of efficient and honest administration.

Does a soldier's assumption of the Governor-Generalship imply a form of military dictatorship in Pakistan? It does not, in fact, change the position in any way. Ever since Mr. Ghulam Mohammed dissolved the Constituent Assembly last autumn, the decisive factor has been the Army's firm support of the Government. The Governor-General had no need to summon as much as an extra platoon to Karachi—everyone knew where the Army stood, and in Pakistan the prestige of the Army is immense.

## L'Affaire Dominici

**I**T is three years, almost to the day, since the murder of Sir Jack Drummond and his family. Although the aged Gaston Dominici was found guilty and now lies in a prison hospital at Marseilles, reinvestigations, both official and amateur, are in full swing. Meanwhile the lugubrious countryside around Lurs is enjoying an undeserved popularity.

The literature of the case has hitherto been flimsy; but with the publication of M. Jean Giono's "Notes sur l'affaire Dominici" we are taken into the highest class of informed analysis. M. Giono, one of the most distinguished writers alive, is to Upper Provence what Thomas Hardy was to Dorset. He was present throughout the trial—sitting almost within reach of the accused—and he speaks from forty years' intimate experience of the region and its inhabitants.

## A Forbidding Countryside

**HIS** book is not an attack on French justice, although it does nothing to lessen whatever misgivings the reader may have on that score. Nor does it offer any solution to the many problems which remain unsolved. "I don't say," declares M. Giono of the accused, "that he was not guilty. I say that he was not proved guilty to me."

Where most English people will have regarded the Dominici family as isolated monsters, M. Giono suggests that the abnormality lies in the region, not in them. Where most of us are brought up short by the accused man's cryptic answers to questions, M. Giono sees in those same answers the reflection of a countryside where "hated is ferocious, anger unrestrained and ambition unmeasured." Where jealousy and envy wreak miracles, and virtues have no point of comparison with

## By ATTICUS

the virtues of so-called 'civilised people.' Where generosity strikes terror, tenderness has the savour of mortal sin, friendship respects no laws—not even those of nature—and courage is still and quiet as a jar of oil."

An English translation, I understand, is on the way.

## Fruitful Wasteland

**THOSE** who remember my colleague Dilys Powell's account of last summer's underwater-archaeologising off the island of Chios will be stirred, as I was, by the news that as from tomorrow a series of similar operations will be conducted off the north coast of Crete by a team of divers under the direction of Mr. M. S. F. Hood, the Director of the British School of Archaeology in Athens. The work is being carried out with equipment which was presented by *THE SUNDAY TIMES*, as a result of Lord Kemsley's personal interest; and Mr. Hood hopes, I hear, that harbours and sunken wrecks dating from the Minoan era may be discovered during the summer.

## Treasure from the Agora

**MR. HOOD** is the pattern of courtesy, and I could never draw from him—even if he shared the feelings that prompted them—those cries of rage and chagrin



with which many of his colleagues greeted Miss Nancy Mitford's recent estimate of the excavations in the Athenian Agora. It is, however, from the latest annual report of the British School that I have taken this specimen of the objects which were found there in 1954. It is described as "echoing one of the finest known examples of late fifth century turetic"; and the warrior is estimated, with fine impartiality, to be "either exhausted or in mourning."

## Deauville Dictator

"**DEAUVILLE**," said Jean Dautourd a week or two ago, "is what Versailles was two hundred years ago—a delicious place that everyone speaks ill of."

Architecturally, I doubt if Deauville can stand up to the comparison; but for luxurious contrivance the high-summer season there has few equals in the world, and I have always been curious as to the real nature of M. François André, now nearer eighty than seventy, who since 1928 has been the affable dictator of Deauville.

I knew, for instance, that after beginning life as a baker's assistant and an undertaker's mute, he had launched out on his own as the proprietor of a single slot-machine; that when he married his wife in 1922 he gave her (having bought it at ten centimes the square metre) what is now the flourishing resort of La Baule.

That his personal habits are re-

strained and temperate did not astound me, but the connection between success and self-abnegation is made painfully clear by one item in M. Dautourd's witty account. Not to eat one's own peaches is the most delicate of deprivations—and one that M. André endures annually, in the interests of the Grande Quinzaine de Deauville.

## Younger Generation

**THE** English theatregoer is the most conservative of beings; and although there are doubtless always Dauphins and Pretenders among our younger actors and actresses, it is not easy for them to part the ranks of our senior favourites.

It is therefore with particular relish that I look forward to the series of plays in which Mr. Paul Scofield is to appear this coming season. This well-graced, if not notably various, young player has been dealt a hand which any actor might envy: "Hamlet," Mr. Elliot's "The Family Reunion," and an adaptation of Mr. Graham Greene's "The Power and The Glory."

In Shakespeare and Mr. Elliot, Mr. Scofield can draw upon his natural bent for a distressed, melodious aristocracy; it is Mr. Greene's whisky-priest, I fancy, that will provide the full test of his powers and give the season its own special resonance.

## Clever Poll!

**THERE** was a time when Russian diplomats were the best linguists in the world; but today the British Foreign Service can hold its own in this respect, with that of any other country.

One of its star performers is Mr. "Joe" Parrott, our Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, who has been negotiating with Mr. Kuznetsov on the rights of British fishermen in the White Sea.

Mr. Parrott's Russian is well up to the standard of his Norwegian, Dutch, Swedish, and Serbo-Croat; and some years ago, when he was in Brussels, he especially distinguished himself in the course of an hour-long technical conversation with the Soviet Ambassador. At the end of this Mr. Avlyov crossed the room and delivered himself of what he took to be a well-merited compliment. "The British parrot is really a miracle," he was thought to have said. "In one hour he made only one slip and his accent is wonderful."

## Un-unified German

**TEN** years ago the notion of the "good German" was one of the most controversial of topics. Today the good German is generally supposed to be identical with the unified German; but there are still many reputable Germans who have no great respect for this ideal, and one of them was Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, who died last Tuesday.

Forty years a Field-Marshal, Prince Rupprecht was an active soldier as much detested by his enemies as any Prussian; but in private life he displayed the wide knowledge and discrimination which made Munich, in the nineteenth century the artistic capital of Southern Europe. (His understanding of Persian art, for instance, was very useful to the London exhibition of 1931.)

A convinced and out-and-out Bavarian, he was openly contemptuous of the Nazi regime and deplored its close association with his native province. I always like the reply which he made, in 1938, to a friend who asked if he ever went to stay in his castle at Berchtesgaden. "No—I find Berchtesgaden rather crowded now."